

## Message Text

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S/S: PSBRIDGES

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS - FOR SEELYE FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US

SUBJECT: EVACUATION FROM LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 6216

1. WE AGREE THAT WE SHOULD FOLLOW TWO-STAGE APPROACH FOR EVACUATION OF EMBASSY, WITH DECISION ON SECOND (TOTAL EVACUATION) STAGE HELD IN ABEYANCE UNTIL WE CAN SEE HOW SITUATION EVOLVES OVER NEXT TWO WEEKS OR SO. OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO STIMULATE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PRIVATE AMERICANS TO LEAVE IN STAGE ONE. IF THIS RESULTED IN DEPARTURES OF FURTHER BRITISH AND OTHER FOREIGN NATIONALS AS WELL SO THAT EVACUATION IN EFFECT TOOK ON AN INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER, THIS OBVIOUSLY WOULD HAVE ADVANTAGES FROM POINT OF VIEW OF SECURING ARAB AND PARTICULARLY PLO COOPERATION. BRITISH

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HERE HAVE JUST TOLD US FOLLOWING, HOWEVER, WHICH SUGGESTS

THAT OUR MOVE IN THE END MAY BE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY AN AMERICAN ONE. BRITISH DO NOT BELIEVE SITUATION CALLS FOR IMMINENT CLOSURE OF THEIR EMBASSY, WHICH WOULD BE SEEN AS ABANDONMENT OF LEBANON. THEY PLAN TO CUT EMBASSY TO MINIMUM (EIGHT PERSONS), AND HOLD IN ABEYANCE PLANS FOR TOTAL CLOSURE. AS FOR PRIVATE BRITISH SUBJECTS, WHILE THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN AMPLE WARNING AND OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE, BRITISH WOULD STILL FEEL OBLIGATION FOR REMAINING CITIZENS IF THEY

DECIDED TO CLOSE EMBASSY ENTIRELY.

2. FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE DECIDED TO PROCEED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 16, WE WOULD GET OUT WORD TO AMERICAN COMMUNITY THAT, IN VIEW OF INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS AND SUPPLY SITUATION, WE ARE SHARPLY REDUCING EMBASSY STAFF ON TUESDAY, JULY 20, AND URGE REMAINING AMERICANS TO DEPART AT SAME TIME. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PROPOSED ANNOUNCEMENT, ON WHICH WE REQUEST YOUR COMMENTS URGENTLY:

BEGIN TEXT: THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IN BEIRUT WISHES TO INFORM ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS STILL IN LEBANON THAT IT WILL BE ELIMINATING THE MAJORITY OF ITS FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING CONSULAR SERVICES, AS OF MONDAY, JULY 19. IT IS FORCED TO TAKE THIS STEP BY THE INCREASING DIFFICULTIES OF OPERATING IN BEIRUT, WHICH REQUIRE THE REDUCTION OF THE EMBASSY STAFF TO A BARE MINIMUM. THE EMBASSY WILL NO LONGER HAVE THE CAPABILITY EFFECTIVELY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION OR SERVICES FOR THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY AFTER THAT DATE. WE THEREFORE STRONGLY URGE ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AT THIS TIME.

THE EMBASSY IS ARRANGING TRANSPORTATION FOR DEPARTURE FROM WEST BEIRUT ON TUESDAY, JULY 20. DETAILS OF ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEPARTURE WILL BE BROADCAST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND AT THAT TIME INFORMATION CAN ALSO BE SECURED BY TELEPHONING THE EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION, TELEPHONE 361800 OR 348319. AMERICAN CITIZENS ARE URGED MEANWHILE TO INFORM THE EMBASSY BY NOON SATURDAY, JULY 17, IF THEY PLAN TO DEPART ON JULY 20. END TEXT.

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3. FINAL DECISION ON METHOD OF EVACUATION WILL DEPEND UPON MAGNITUDE OF RESPONSE FROM AMERICAN AND POSSIBLY OTHER FOREIGN COMMUNITIES, ON JUDGMENT ABOUT RELATIVE SECURITY OF VARIOUS METHODS, AND ON RESPONSES TO OUR APPROACHES TO CERTAIN ARAB GOVERNMENTS AND PLO (SEE BELOW). (WE RECOGNIZE THAT ESTIMATES OF NUMBER OF EVACUEES WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MAKE PRIOR TO GETTING RESPONSES TO ANNOUNCE-

MENT, BUT PLEASE GIVE US YOUR MOST REALISTIC GUESS AS TO HOW MANY US CITIZENS AND THEIR ALIEN DEPENDENTS, AS WELL AS OTHER NATIONALS, MIGHT WANT TO JOIN IN ORGANIZED DEPARTURE). TO HOLD TO TUESDAY EVACUATION DATE, WE

WILL NEED TO MAKE A DECISION ON METHOD OF EVACUATION BY JULY 18.

4. TO ASSIST US IN MAKING THIS DECISION, WE NEED YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PREFERRED EVACUATION ROUTE. WE WILL ALSO BE SEEKING VIEWS OF KEY ARAB GOVERNMENTS IN THIS RESPECT. WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT WANT TO RESORT TO NAVAL EVACUATION (FLUID DRIVE) EXCEPT IN EXTREMIS AND WISH FIRST TO EXPLORE CIVILIAN ALTERNATIVES. AS WE SEE IT, THERE ARE FOUR NON-MILITARY POSSIBILITIES:

A. ONE WOULD BE OVERLAND CONVOY TO DAMASCUS, WHICH OF COURSE WILL DEPEND ON NUMBERS OF EVACUEES INVOLVED, AVAILABILITY OF GASOLINE AND VEHICLES, AND SECURITY ASSURANCES FROM ALL THOSE THROUGH WHOSE AREAS OF CONTROL CONVOY WOULD PASS. WE NOTE THAT SMALL ROAD CONVOYS HAVE BEEN PROCEEDING TO DAMASCUS IN RECENT DAYS. COULD THE GASOLINE PROBLEM BE EASED BY BRINGING TO MARJAOUN AREA A SYRIAN TANKER TO REFUEL THE CONVOY?

B. SECOND POSSIBILITY WOULD BE BY CIVILIAN SHIP, EITHER LEASED ON CYPRUS OR THROUGH DIVERSION OF AMERICAN MERCHANT VESSEL IF ONE WERE WITHIN FEASIBLE DISTANCE FROM BEIRUT IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (WE ARE CHECKING ON THIS). IF CIVILIAN VESSEL WERE USED, WE PRESUME IT WOULD HAVE TO PICK UP PASSENGERS FROM BAIN MILITAIRE. OUR INFORMATION HERE IS THAT CIVILIAN VESSELS COULD NOT TIE UP AT JETTY AND WOULD HAVE TO ANCHOR THREE-TENTHS MILE OFFSHORE, THUS  
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REQUIRING SMALL CRAFT TRANSFER OF EVACUEES FROM BAIN TO LARGER VESSEL. IS THIS FEASIBLE?

C. A VARIATION OF THIS WOULD BE TO EVACUATE BY CIVILIAN VESSEL FROM SIDON AS SOVIETS RECENTLY DID. THIS WOULD INVOLVE ROAD CONVOY ONLY TO SIDON, WHICH WOULD SEEM TO SIMPLIFY LOGISTICAL AND SECURITY PROBLEMS.

D. FOURTH POSSIBILITY WOULD BE AIR EVACUATION FROM BEIRUT AIRPORT USING CHARTERED TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, PERHAPS FROM MEA WHICH WE UNDERSTAND HAS AIRCRAFT IN ATHENS. IF WE CHOSE THIS ALTERNATIVE, WE COULD ENLIST COOPERATION OF SAUDIS AND SYRIANS, WHO HAVE FORCES AT BEIRUT AIRPORT UNDER ARAB LEAGUE MANDATE, AND WHO COULD HELP ASSURE SECURITY. IN ADDITION, SAUDIS COULD POSSIBLY PROVIDE

TRANSPORTATION TO AIRPORT. AS WITH OTHER ROUTES, WE WOULD ALSO NEED TO ASSURE COOPERATION OF PLO (THROUGH EGYPTIANS SAUDIS AND YOUR DIRECT SECURITY CONTACT) AND OF MARONITES (PRESUMABLY THROUGH SYRIANS BUT PERHAPS ALSO DIRECTLY BY SENDING AN AMERICAN IN FROM CYPRUS TO TELL THEM WHAT WE WERE PLANNING). WITH RESPECT TO THIS ALTERNATIVE THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONCERN EXPRESSED HERE ABOUT VULNERABILITY OF AIRCRAFT ON LANDING APPROACH AND TAKE-OFF TO FIRE (INCLUDING POSSIBLY SA-7'S) FROM UNCONTROLLED ELEMENTS WITHIN RANGE OF AIRPORT. ASSUMING WE COULD GET ASSURANCES OF SECURITY AND NON-INTERFERENCE FROM PLO AND MARONITES, WE NEED YOUR JUDGMENT ABOUT RISKS OF THIS ALTERNATIVE.

5. WE RECOGNIZE THAT, EVEN THOUGH WE ARE NOT MOVING TO TOTAL EVACUATION AT THIS TIME, ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FURTHER REDUCTION COULD NEVERTHELESS HAVE SOME OF THE ADVERSE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT. IN PARTICULAR, SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT COULD BE INTERPRETED BY PLO AS MEANING WE HAVE REASON TO EXPECT SYRIAN AND/OR CHRISTIAN ASSAULT ON WEST BEIRUT, WHICH COULD MAKE PLO LESS WILLING TO COOPERATE.

6. TO GENERATE MAXIMUM PRESSURE FOR PLO COOPERATION, WE WILL THEREFORE BE INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR PORTER TO APPROACH SAUDI GOVERNMENT TO TELL THEM WHAT WE ARE CONTEMPLATING,  
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TO SEEK THEIR VIEWS ON BEST METHOD OF EVACUATION INCLUDING POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE FROM THEIR ARAB LEAGUE CONTINGENT IN LEBANON, AND TO REQUEST THEM TO USE ALL THEIR INFLUENCE TO ASSURE PLO COOPERATION IN FACILITATING OUR MOVE. WE WILL ALSO ASK AMBASSADOR MURPHY TO MAKE SIMILAR APPROACH TO SARG WITHOUT, OF COURSE, ASKING FOR SYRIAN HELP VIS-A-VIS PLO BUT ASKING IF SYRIANS WILL APPROACH MARONITES TO ENSURE THAT THEY WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH OR HARASS EVACUATION MOVE, WHATEVER METHOD WE DECIDE UPON. FINALLY, WE WILL ASK AMBASSADOR EILTS TO INFORM EGYPTIANS OF OUR PLANS AND TO SEEK THEIR HELP WITH PLO. WE WILL ALSO WANT YOU TO MAKE APPROACH TO EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT AND, THROUGH YOUR SECURITY CONTACT, TO PLO, TAKING WITH THEM SAME LINE WE WILL BE TAKING IN CAIRO (INSTRUCTIONS TO EILTS WILL BE REPEATED TO YOU). YOU SHOULD NOT RPT NOT MAKE THIS APPROACH, HOWEVER, UNTIL FURTHER INSTRUCTED TO DO SO.

7. WE WILL BE COMMENTING SEPARATELY ON YOUR PROPOSED REDUCED STAFFING PATTERN. MEANWHILE, WE ASSUME YOU AGREE THAT FACT YOU WILL BE LEAVING IN THIS STAGE SHOULD BE CLOSELY HELD UNTIL LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT FOR OBVIOUS

POLITICAL AND SECURITY REASONS.

8. WITHOUT INSTITUTING ANY DISCUSSIONS OUTSIDE OF  
EMBASSY AT THIS TIME, PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR RESPONSE  
TO THIS MESSAGE BY OPENING OF BUSINESS WASHINGTON TIME  
THURSDAY, JULY 15.

9. FOR INFO ADDRESSEES: YOU SHOULD TAKE NO RPT NO ACTION  
UNTIL SO INSTRUCTED. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

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